



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

21 AUGUST 2020

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Independence – Massive Illegal Pot Farms Discovered in Wilderness

(U) More than 42,000 illegal marijuana plants discovered recently on California public lands have been eradicated. The Inyo County Sheriff's Office announced Thursday that the street value of the plants was estimated between \$84 million and \$169 million. Vast groves of marijuana were discovered in three locations in Inyo County, a sprawling Eastern Sierra wilderness. Agents working for state and federal agencies spent three days destroying 42,306 marijuana plants at the undisclosed locations. An investigation is ongoing and, as of Thursday afternoon, no arrests had been made.

SOURCE: 20 August 2020, [USA Today](#)

(U) San Francisco – Reddit Cracks Down on 7,000 Pages as Facebook Roots Out QAnon 'Extremists'

(U) Reddit has removed almost 7,000 subreddits since it began a concerted policy explicitly banning hate speech at the end of June. As a result, the online discussion platform found hateful posts dropped by 18-percent on the site compared to the two weeks prior to the ban. Preliminary research shows 48-percent of offending content was targeted at race or nationality; 16-percent was focused on class or political affiliation; 12-percent on sexuality; 10-percent on gender; 6-percent on religion and 1-percent on ability. Meanwhile, Facebook announced that it had deleted 790 groups, 100 pages and 1,500 ads connected to QAnon, as well as restricting more than 10,000 QAnon accounts on Instagram, in its biggest strike yet against the baseless conspiracy-theory-driven movement. QAnon followers have been labelled by the FBI as "conspiracy-theory-driven domestic extremists" who pose a terrorism threat.

SOURCE: 21 August 2020, [Engineering and Technology](#)

(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) Texas – \$17 Million in Methamphetamine Seized at Pharr International Bridge

(U) Pharr – Authorities at the Pharr International Bridge seized \$17 million worth of methamphetamine hidden in a tractor-trailer. US Customs and Border Protection, Office of Field Operations officers at the bridge referred the tractor-trailer for further investigation. A secondary inspection revealed 875 packages of methamphetamine hidden in the trailer's roof. Officials valued the 887-pounds at \$17,747,000. The case is under investigation by Homeland Security Investigations.

SOURCE: 20 August 2020, [Local 23 KVEO](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) Colorado – Zoom Hackers Target Columbine High School with Threats of '2020 Columbine Remake'

(U) Denver – Hackers disrupted a Zoom conference between Columbine High School teachers and parents on Tuesday with threats of a "2020 Columbine remake." Columbine teachers were updating parents on e-learning procedures amid the COVID-19 pandemic when bad actors started showing images of Nazi soldiers and people being beheaded. One hacker shouted, "Going to shoot your kid in the 2020 Columbine remake!" during the call. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office confirmed that they are investigating the incident and added that they are taking the situation seriously.

SOURCE: 20 August 2020, [Fox News](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

(U) Texas – Three Charged in Scheme to Move US Currency to Iran

(U) Houston – Muzzamil Zaidi, a US citizen living in Qom, Iran; Asim Naqvi, a US citizen living in Houston; and Pakistani national Ali Chawla, living in Qom, have all been charged in connection with a campaign to move US currency from the US to Iran on behalf of Iran's supreme leader. Justice Department officials said Wednesday the defendants "have considerable operational links" to Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps. The Justice Department alleges Zaidi, Chawla, and other members of an organization called Islamic Pulse received permission from Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to collect a religious tax on Khamenei's behalf and send half the money to Yemen. Zaidi was also charged with acting in the US as an agent of the government of Iran without first notifying the attorney general, according to the Justice Department.

SOURCE: 20 August 2020, [Voice of America News](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) New Zealand – Court Set to Sentence Killer in Christchurch Mosque Massacre

(U) Wellington – A New Zealand court will begin hearings on Monday on the sentencing of Brenton Tarrant, a suspected white supremacist accused of killing 51 Muslim worshippers in a massacre that shocked the world and prompted a global campaign to stamp out online hate. Tarrant, an Australian national, attacked Muslims attending Friday prayers in the South Island city of Christchurch on 15 March 2019 with semi-automatic rifles, broadcasting the shooting live on Facebook. A High Court judge will hear statements from 66 survivors of the attack early in the week and Tarrant is likely to be present in the courtroom. Tarrant will be allowed to speak to the court before sentencing. An order issued earlier this month gives the court discretionary powers to prohibit the publication of victim statements, if needed, and also ensure it is not used as a platform to cause further harm.

SOURCE: 21 August 2020, [USA News](#)

(U) Turkey – Six Iraqis Arrested for Links to ISIS in Northern Province

(U) London – At least six suspects have been arrested in Turkey's Black Sea region for links to the Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS). The suspects were apprehended in simultaneous operations by anti-terror and intelligence teams in the northern Samsun province. The teams raided multiple locations in the province's Ilkadim and Tekkekoy districts. Digital materials were also seized in the operations and the suspects underwent medical examinations following their arrest.

SOURCE: 21 August 2020, [Anadolu Agency](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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